

This is an odd one, and may be a bit too personal.

It is a kind of a parody of what I actually regard as one of the all time great TV half-hours - the chilling first episode of Dr. Who that went out 40 years ago in November 1963.

Non Who-ites need to know the following:-

The Doctor and his grand-daughter were time travellers from a distant future. They had a "ship" - the Tardis - that could transport them to any point in time and any point in space, but were not really in control of it, and doomed largely to wander where-ever the Tardis took them. There were also hints that they would not be welcome to return to their own time, though the reasons were left vague. The teen-age Susan had tired of this roving life, and wanted to settle down in one place for a while. So when they "landed" in London in 1963 she got herself enrolled in school and tried to become a "normal" girl of that time.

She was quickly rumbled by two of her teachers. They wanted to encourage her academically, noting her advanced knowledge in certain areas, though non-plussed that, for instance, she insisted that Britain had a decimal currency (before we did). They were also worried that something was amiss at home. She seemed afraid of anyone meeting her guardian grandfather, and her address proved to be that of a bombed-site scrapyard.

One night, after detaining her for a while under pretence of lending a book, they followed her home from school. After an angry altercation with the sinister appearing Doctor they forced their way into the Tardis. (The Tardis was bigger on the inside than the outside, and was hidden inside a police telephone box.) The Doctor refused to let them go and the Tardis "took off" with two extra passengers to resume its endless wandering.

This bowled me over as a kid, and I think still stands up surprisingly well. (I have it on video somewhere.)

However, having a rather jaundiced view of the average school-teacher of that era, it has occurred to me that literally slapping her down would have been a more likely reaction to the mysterious Susan than encouraging or assisting her. So this alternative reading is the basis of my story.

Usual disclaimers. This does not advocate beating school-kids. If anything the moral points the other way.

The ancient electric bell sounded in its cracked and off-key fashion, and after a momentÆs pause came an indefinable sound that might have been the exhalation of several hundred teen-age breaths. It was quickly followed by the rising chatter as every class-room door opened and streams of girls and boys flowed into the corridors released from their dayÆs captivity. Energy was expending itself in fidgets and argument and, among the older kids, in little innocent flirtations.

As the noise died down, a teacher emerged from one of the class-rooms, her grim expression contrasting with that of the high-spirited youngsters. ÆWait there, Susan!ö, she ordered, over her shoulder. A few steps down the corridor she tapped on and opened another door.

Ian Chesterton, a science master, was cheerfully rinsing out his test tubes. ÆOh hello Barbara. Do you want a lift?ö

ÆWell yes, if you donÆt mind waiting a few minutes. Can I borrow your cane?ö

ÆAh!! Of course!ö Ian indicated with his eyes the yellow rattan hanging in its place of honour beside the blackboard. ÆAnd whoÆs the lucky boy?ö

ÆGirl. Foremanö

ÆSusan Foreman? Then itÆs you thatÆs the lucky one.ö

ÆMmm? Why do you say that?ö Barbara had taken down the cane and given it a swish through the air.

Ian made a sound that might have been the beginning of a chuckle.

ÆWell, IÆve been itching to get that cane onto her for weeks.ö

ÆAny particular reason?ö

Ian resumed his washing, perhaps a little embarrassed.

ÆBecause she is so bloody patronising. That girl knows more science than I ever will. And she lets it out a little at a time so as not to embarrass me.ö

ÆI know the feeling, Ian. I really do. It is much the same with history. You would think she has seen it at first hand.ö

“So finally she has given one of us a chance. What has she done.”

“Told me that there are one hundred pennies in a pound.”

Ian laughed. “And you are going to enter that in the punishment book as a?”

“Gross impertinence. Unless you have a better idea.”

“Hmmm? Bringing the game into disrepute?”

“Do you think I could give her six more for that?”

“Better not try the experiment. Our headmaster may not appreciate surrealism.”

Barbara was by now “fencing” with the cane as though it were a particularly swishy rapier. “Perhaps you are right. A lovely cane this, by the way. Much better than mine.”

“Yes. Quite a lot of people ask to borrow it.” Ian had finished his washing up, and was wiping his hands on a towel.

“Like to come and witness?” asked Barbara.

“I thought you were never going to ask. Lead on McDuff.”

“I think the correct quotation more appropriate.”

Ian raised his eyebrows interrogatively.

“Check the play. The line is really LAY on McDuff.”

She gave another vigorous swoosh with the cane.

“And I intend to lay these on really well!”

In Barbara’s classroom, Susan Foreman was sat on a table swinging her legs in time to the rock music coming from a portable radio that she held to her ear. Her pleated skirt was a little shorter than the strict uniform length, and her tight blouse (with tie) seemed to accentuate her quite substantial bosom. She looked excited and not the least like a girl facing imminent

punishment. Her attitude riled Ian, and though he should really have deferred to Barbara in her own classroom he went into full reprimand mode almost automatically.

“Turn that row OFF! And give me that machine! I am confiscating that until the end of term.”

Fortunately, Barbara seemed not put out, and in fact backed him up strongly.

“Susan Foreman, you are a disgrace. A girl awaiting punishment is expected to act with a little decorum. Some signs of penitence might be expected. Instead you turn my classroom into a discotheque.” She managed to express her deep contempt in her pronunciation of that unfamiliar last word.

Looking abashed, Susan snapped off the radio and handed it to Ian.

“I will not add to your punishment this evening,” continued Barbara in a tone indicating undue leniency. “But you must return on Friday evening to see Mr. Chesterton. Just possibly he may be generous and give you back your transistor. But he will most certainly be giving you something else to go with it.”

She held up the cane in both hands and flexed it, to indicate what this something else was likely to be.

Susan made no reply but was observed making a nervous swallow.

Barbara liked the effect and flexed the cane once more.

“Now, you know why are you being punished this evening, Susan?”

“Erà Not exactly.”

“Tell me again, then. How many pennies in a pound?”

“Er.. Two hundred andà Two hundred and forty.” She was clearly performing a mental calculation.

“So not one hundred?”

“Well, I was only eight years out; in 1971à..”

Susan subsided under the quizzical stare of her two teachers.

“How many pennies in a shilling?”

“Uh? Twelve.”

“And how many shillings in the pound?”

“Twenty.”

“See. It’s working already. An hour ago you were the only 15 year old in Great Britain not to know those facts. Now you suddenly remember. Wonderful instrument, the cane. I hope this isn’t going to disappear in eight years time.”

“Oh no. Corporal punishment won’t be abolished until 1985.”

Susan bit off the end of her sentence suddenly, not quite completing the last word. Ian and Barbara glanced briefly at each other and tacitly decided to ignore this for the benefit of their sanity.

“To make sure you remember you will receive twelve on your posterior. Then four on each hand will make the number up to twenty. So you need never have trouble with money again.”

“Bend across my desk, if you please.”

Susan hesitatingly turned towards the desk. Barbara waited until the upper half of her body was resting horizontally, then nodded to Ian.

Ian stepped up to her. “I hope you are wearing uniform,” he murmured, and with an expert flick threw her loose fitting skirt up over her back.

Fortunately for her, Susan was indeed wearing uniform knickers.

Dark blue, and of full cut they not only encased the whole of her bottom but boasted miniscule legs that covered a half-inch of her upper thighs. The snug covering seemed to exaggerate the full round curve of Susan’s bottom.

Ian stepped back, admiring the sight, as Barbara raised her cane.

She lowered it gently just to gauge the distance and noted with satisfaction the involuntary flinch that this tickle produced. She swung the cane back.

WHAACK!! Oww!

The cry was muted and owed more to shock than to real pain but was quite satisfactory.

Susan was indeed shocked. Somehow, right up to that first impact she had been thinking of the forthcoming caning in almost abstract terms. She had known that young people of this time and place got hit on their buttocks. It had just seemed another mildly amusing little peculiarity. Owwww! When she had persuaded her grandfather to rest for a spell from their relentless wanderings and allow her to live a 'normal' life on a single planet, she had been quite willing to take part in this peculiar little ritual. She had even been rather curious about it. Corporal punishment had, of course, disappeared hundreds of years before her birth. Somehow it had never occurred to her just how much it was going to 'hurt'.

Barbara was pleased with the vocalisation and the slight bucking of the bottom in front of her. She had always regarded herself as a good caner and

felt that Ian, who admittedly had a fearsome reputation amongst the kids, was just a little condescending towards her in this area. But there could surely be no complaints about this thrashing. The cane was swinging like an

extension of her arm and biting juicily. Whaaaackk!!

Ian was watching with satisfaction. Susan had been in need of a caning for weeks, just due to her general bumptious attitude. Barbara's prowess impressed him. She was building up the warmth in that backside with skill and aplomb. Whaaaackk!!

Susan had by now lost all her curiosity about corporal punishment. Remarks she had heard from her companions now seemed less like jokes. A phrase about not being able to sit down for a week had once made her giggle. As another slashing, burning stroke cut into her rear cheeks, she wondered if she really would be able to sit down after. She swallowed the yell that was aching to burst from her throat. Only sheer pride was keeping her in position. She who had faced the terrors of ten galaxies was not going to be defeated by this rather ignorant woman and a little stick. Then another thin tongue of fire bit into her and she once more almost lost control.

Barbara Wright had been a teacher long enough to know when a caning was

hurting and when it was REALLY hurting. As stroke number nine pressed into Susan's taut knickers she knew that this one was REALLY hurting. She could tell that Ian thought this also. That somehow gave her a lot of satisfaction. She swung back the cane a little further to make the next one cut even deeper. Whaaacckkkk!!!

Ian too had learned to interpret the body-language of those undergoing punishment. Or perhaps, he mused as he watched Susan's cheeks clench in anticipation of the penultimate stroke, what he meant was bottom-language. Whaackk!! Another nice one. Barbara was a much better caner than he had given her credit for. A thought recurred to him that had crossed his mind before. There were some girls who needed the cane, not just because of their attitude or behaviour, but because they had bottoms that just demanded to have a cane laid across them. He wondered if his lady colleagues felt the same about some boys' bottoms. Maybe he could ask Barbara afterwards.

The last of the twelve strokes caught Susan's bottom on the very lowest curve. She let out a piercing shriek and Ian and Barbara caught each other's eyes in satisfaction.

“Up on your feet, Susan!”

Barbara had given the sobbing pupil a few moments to lie across the desk and recover. But it seemed slightly disrespectful for a girl to spend too long showing her knickers to her teachers. In any case, there was more work to be done.

Susan levered herself up. As she straightened her pleated skirt fell back into place. Hesitantly she turned to face them. She kept her arms stiffly at her sides, resisting the twin temptations of clutching at her bottom or of wiping the tears from her face. She was also attempting to hold up her head and meet their gaze, but was not succeeding.

“Right, Susan. Pennies in the shilling, again?”

A low mumble. “Twelve, Miss Wright.”

“Can't hear you!” Almost true, though she would have said it anyway.

“Twelve, Miss Wright.” A little louder, but very subdued. Almost perfect, in fact. So pleasing in contrast with her earlier bumptiousness.

“So. Four on each hand and you will remember how many shillings in the pound. Left hand out first, please!”

Susan very hesitantly stretched out her left arm. Barbara raised the cane aloft. Then she became aware of a warm presence behind her and of Ian’s voice whispering in her ear.

She lowered the cane again, noticing a faint tremble in Susan’s lips as she did so.

“Mr. Chesterton, more lenient than I, considers this cane to be too severe for punishment of the hands.” She paused a moment, so as to raise the hope of a complete let-off. “But I have a cane of my own which will be just the thing for you.”

She turned and slapped Ian’s cane down on a nearby pupil-desk. Susan jumped at the clatter it produced. Her grandfather had often told her that she would never make a really first-class scientist. Her brain was powerful enough to too prone to leaping wildly from subject to subject. But her thoughts were now glued immovably to one subject and one subject alone – her own throbbing buttocks. She had no doubt felt worse pain in her time. She had even, in her adventurous life, had pain deliberately inflicted on her before. But somehow she had never suffered as much as she was doing now.

She was not just in pain – though that stick caused more devastation than she had thought possible – she felt deeply humiliated as well. Blinking and sniffing to combat her tears, she decided that this is what it meant to be “punished”.

Ian watched as Barbara unlocked a cupboard, and tried not to look disgusted

at the little cane that was produced. A mere two foot long, and thin, it was what he privately regarded as a “girlie cane”. He hoped that Barbara did not threaten senior boys with it! But then he grinned ruefully. Foreman was a girl. Anyway, he was no judge of hand-caning implements. He was a bum-caner. Always had been.

Barbara liked caning hands. As the cane bit home she would look deep into the eyes of the boy or girl receiving it. It gave her a feeling below her waist that she had never quite liked to analyse. She watched Ian and Susan

from the corner of her eye as she swished her cane, getting used to its light springiness after the heaviness of Ian's bum-walloper. Perhaps her own little friend was not quite in the same league as Ian's, but she thought that both master and pupil might be surprised at how much it could do.

Now, Susan, let us have your left hand please. Right out! Palm up! Fingers straight! Now, I want you to count these.

The tip of the cane was placed on Susan's upturned palm and tapped there gently two or three times, then, unexpectedly, slashed sharply down. Susan exhaled sharply in shock. For several seconds her mouth worked silently and her fingers moved into and out of a half-clenched fist. Then, in a voice a little uncertain of its octave, she managed to squeak out:-

One, Miss Wright!

Barbara gave a rather evil smile. No, Susan, not One!. We are counting the shillings in a pound, remember? So unless you want ten on each hand, the number is.

Thirteen, Miss Wright, Susan blurted out with indecent haste.

Whaap! The cane had sliced down again as soon as the words were out.

Oowww! Still not quite a cry, but a very loud breath. Fourteen, Miss Wright.

Other hand then, Susan! She extended it. Whaap! The stroke came almost before its target was in place and caught Susan (and Ian) by surprise.

Oowwww Definitely a cry, high and squeaky.

Barbara knew she had won this little battle. Her cane rose and hovered expectantly in the air. It took a few moments for Susan to remember. Fifteen Miss Wright! she suddenly squeaked.

As if at a signal the cane zapped down once more. Barbara was peering straight into Susan's eyes and could see the hurt there. Ian was also able to read from her body-language how much that slicing stroke had got home. He began to revise his opinion of hand caning. Maybe he might get one of these little canes, not as a substitute for his old friend lying on the desk there, but maybe as a useful supplement.

Susan had been ordered to bring out the first hand again. Whaap!, Oowww,

“Seventeen, Miss Wright.” Other hand once more. Whaaapp!, “Owww!!
ö, sob,
“Eighteen, Miss Wright.” All proceeding with quiet efficiency. The girl
had been reduced and what remained was just a chore. Whaap! Once more
on
the right hand. “Nineteen, Miss Wright.” A gesture sufficed for that hand
to be dropped and the left extended. The cane rose a little higher than
usual. The tip bit deeply into the proffered palm. Susan had to work her
mouth before getting out “Twenty, Miss Wright!”.

Barbara smiled at her, slapping the cane gently against her own left hand.
“So you won’t forget again the number of shillings in the pound?” “No,
Miss
Wright,” promised a totally subdued Susan. Barbara let her wait a few
moments more, then:-

“Well, you may go. I can see that has been a good lesson. And do not
forget your appointment with Mr. Chesterton on Friday.”

Ian and Barbara stood still, trying to look stern and trying not to look at
each other as Susan retrieved her satchel, almost succeeding in getting it
over her shoulder without properly grasping the strap in her smarting
hands.

She then essayed to open the door without taking a grip on the handle.
Finally she got herself out of the classroom but a piercing squeal echoed
back from the corridor. The door, swinging to behind her, had tapped her
gently on the bottom.

As they chuckled, Ian asked: “Care for a drink on the way home?”

Susan never did keep her appointment with Ian. Back at the scrapyard,
there
was a tearful conference with her grandfather, and that very evening the
police box left for another universe.

Ian and Barbara seemed to be brought together by Susan’s punishment.
Previously casual friends, they soon after started an affair. They were
together for some time and spoke of marriage, but eventually drifted apart
again.

At the height of their affair Ian actually made Barbara a present of his
cane. It was a gift that he came to regret. He immediately purchased
another that was supposedly identical, but it was a long time before it
fitted into his hand the same way.

Both remained teachers, and both were known as strict disciplinarians right up to the abolition of corporal punishment, which came in 1985, just as Susan Foreman had said it would. But by then they had not only had they forgotten her words, neither even remembered her existence.

Soon after, both took early retirement.

Neither was ever remotely aware of how close they had come to a life-changing event that foggy winter evening in 1963.